

**BEFORE THE
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION
OF THE
STATE OF INDIANA**

IN THE MATTER OF:

FW: RACCOON AND OPOSSUM)	Administrative Cause
CHASING & TAKING)	Number 10-038D
)	
)	(LSA Document #10-230F)

**REPORT OF PUBLIC HEARING AND COMMENTS,
AND RECOMMENDATION REGARDING FINAL ADOPTION**

1. RULE PROCESSING

The proposed amendments to 312 IAC 9-3-14 will change the start of the trapping season for raccoons and opossums to November 8th instead of November 15th, thereby adding seven (7) days to the trapping season. The amendments will also add twenty-four (24) days to the raccoon and opossum chasing season by changing the start date from February 15th to February 1st and the end date from October 14th to October 25th.

The Natural Resources Commission (*NRC*) gave preliminary adoption to the rule package on March 17, 2010.

A “Notice of Intent” to adopt the proposed rule amendment was posted to the INDIANA REGISTER database website as 20100421-IR-312100230NIA on April 21, 2010. The notice identified Linnea Petercheff, Department of Natural Resources, Division of Fish and Wildlife, as the “small business regulatory coordinator” for purposes of Indiana Code § 4-22-2-28.1.

Fiscal analyses were prepared in association with the proposed rule package. The Department determined that the proposed amendments will impose no costs or requirements upon small businesses. The Department also determined that there would be no fiscal impacts to government as a result of these amendments.

The fiscal analyses, a copy of the proposed rule language and a copy of the posted Notice of Intent were submitted to the Office of Management and Budget on April 23, 2010. In a letter dated August 10, 2010, Christopher A. Ruhl, Director, Office of Management and Budget, recommended that the proposed rule amendments be approved.

The NRC Division of Hearings submitted the rule proposal to the Legislative Services Agency (*LSA*) along with the “Statement Concerning Rules Affecting Small Business”, also referred to as the “Economic Impact Statement”, on August 12, 2010. The Notice of Public Hearing was submitted to LSA on August 17, 2010. The Notice of Public Hearing, along with the Justification Statement and the text of the proposed rule was posted to the INDIANA REGISTER database website on August 25, 2010 as 20100825-IR-312100230PRA. Following receipt of an “Authorization to Proceed” from LSA on August 18, 2010, the NRC Division of Hearings also caused a Notice of Public Hearing to be published by the Indianapolis Newspapers, a newspaper of general circulation in Marion County Indiana, on August 23, 2010. In addition, the notice of the public hearing and a summary of the proposed rule changes were published on the Commission’s web-based electronic calendar.

2. REPORT OF PUBLIC HEARING AND COMMENTS

a) Public Hearing Comments

The public hearing was conducted as scheduled on September 27, 2010 at 6:00 p.m. at Indianapolis Public Library, Wayne Township Branch, 198 South Girls School Road, Indianapolis, Indiana. Hearing Officer, Sandra Jensen, was present along with Linnea Petercheff of the Department’s Division of Fish and Wildlife. One member of the public appeared.

Bradley E. Hall, Hoosier Tree Dog Alliance, Danville, Indiana

Hall explained that he is a member of the Board of Directors of the Hoosier Tree Dog Alliance (HTDA) and is representing that organization with respect to the proposed amendments relating to the taking and chasing of raccoons and opossums.

He reported that the HTDA worked with the DNR and other sporting groups to bring this proposal forward. Hall specifically thanked the Indiana Deer Hunters Association, the Indiana Bow Hunters Association, the Indiana State Trappers Association, Furtakers of America and the Indiana Sportsmen's Roundtable, for their support in the development of this proposal. He stated that these groups came together constructively in furtherance of Indiana's responsible and effective wildlife management. Hall noted that each of the sportsman's groups involved in concerned with the future of hunting and value every sportsman's opportunity to be in the field. Hall advised that each of the groups has displayed respect in reaching a consensus that will not impinge upon any hunting group's opportunities but will improve the overall state of hunting in Indiana.

b) Comments Received Outside Public Hearing

The period for receiving written comments extended from approximately April 21, 2010 until September 29, 2010. The following written comments were received from members of the public outside of the public hearing held on September 27, 2010.

Jerry Moll, Ripley County, IN, American Kennel Club

As a lifelong resident of Indiana and I support this extension of Coonhound running and trapping. I am a hunter, trapper, fisherman and sportsman.

Wesley R. Coffman, Pendleton, IN

As a lifelong resident of Indiana, I support the extension of coonhound running and trapping. I am a coon hunter, deer hunter, varmint hunter, fisherman, and overall outdoorsman/sportsmen.

James A Stinnett, Newton, IN

I support the running season change! I am a coonhunter & beagler!

Mike Hardwick, Henry, IN

I think this is a good rule change and is long overdue.

Daniel Vandeventer, Greene, IN

I think it is only fair to be able to run your coon hounds year around. I support this proposed rule 100%. I deer hunt, coon hunt. Beagle's and bird dog's don't have any closed running season. PLEASE consider this rule change.

Joe Newlin, Kosciusko, IN

As a lifelong resident of Indiana, and as a coon hunter, deer hunter, small game hunter, and a trapper, I support the administrative rule change proposal.

Richard Emery, Jay Co, IN

I am a lifelong hunter trapper and hunter ed instructor and I support the extension of running law

Jeffrey L. Mullins, Nineveh, IN

In favor of proposed rule change of extending running season.

Lowell Lynn, Coatesville, IN, HTDA

I would like to see the raccoon hound training season extended.

Michael C. Powell, Ohio County, IN

As an Indiana Hunter, I support the running season proposal as recommended by the Indiana Sportsmen's Roundtable task force and written by the DNR.

James M Sizemore, Elkhart County, IN

I fully support the proposed amendment changes to the coon and possum running season. I hope the rule amendment passes.

Jason Andrew Spears, Greensburg-Decatur County, IN

As an avid hound enthusiast, I fully support this extension of coonhound running a trapping.

Ed Farhar, Shoals, Martin County, IN

I am in favor of extending the dog running season for raccoon and opossum.

Timothy W. Knox, Peru, IN

I am a hunter, I support the HTDA and would like to see this amendment passed.

John Stuart, Greensburg, IN

As a lifelong resident of Indiana I support this extension of coonhound running. I am a hunter and fisherman.

Justin Haddon, Greencastle, IN

I support the extension of the running season for coons. Bird and rabbit hunters are able to run/train dogs any time of year, how are coon hounds any different?

Grant Hamner, Shelby County, IN

I support extending the dog running season.

David Schneider, Dearborn, IN

Lifelong resident of our great State of Indiana. I SUPPORT the extension of the Raccoon and Opossum Coonhound running. I am a hunter a fisherman and trapper, an ethical sportsman and father of two Indiana Future Hunters and outdoorsman!

Ray Lunsford II, Ripley County, IN

I would like to see Raccoon & Opossum season longer. I have been coon hunting with hounds since the age of five. I hunt hard year round and I think that this would be a great change.

Jason McGowen, Morgan, IN

As a resident of the state of Indiana, and a lifelong trapper, houndsman, and hunter I fully support the extension of the raccoon running and trapping seasons.

Glen Weaver, Howard County, IN PKC, AKC, UKC, WHCCC

I feel this change would be a great help to those of us who do a lot of competition hunting. (The original catch release format, even before fishing) also being a deer and turkey hunter, I feel that this would have little impact on other sportsman.

Mackie Manns Sr., Lagrange, IN

I would like to see a longer running season for raccoons

Randall L. Helt, Columbus, IN

As a hunter and trapper I approve of this amendment.

Thomas E Hughes, Vincennes, IN

I am in favor of the proposed change in the dog running season. The change would be a positive move for the dog owners.

Toby Flick, Greene County, IN

Excellent proposal!!!

Randy R Wolfe, Wayne, IN, WCCHA & HTDA & NC & FBA

I'm no longer a coon hunter, but still run & train dogs & think the extension of running season would not have a impact anything but positive for our dog sport .

Kevin Zimmerman, Cass, IN, HTDA

I would really like to see this proposal PASS, to be able to keep my hounds in competitive shape at a national level.

Ronnie Robinson, Breckinridge, KY

I support the extension of raccoon and opossum taking/chasing season. I will be buying out of state license to hunt in your state.

Brian Blum, Vanderburgh, IN

As a Indiana resident, a hunter and fisherman, I strongly support the extension of the raccoon running season.

Mike Gibbons, Salem, IN

I am a lifetime resident of Indiana and I DO support this extension of coonhound running season. I am a hunter, fisherman and sportsman!

Thomas M Watkins Jr., Carroll, IN

I wish to see this rule change take effect.

David B. Ecoff, Hancock, IN

It would be nice to be able to run and exercise our coon dogs all year long without having any down time in between seasons.

Bradley E. Hall, Danville, IN

I am in full support of the extension of raccoon Possum taking chasing season, what a great way to increase sports participation and help to eliminate the over populated coons/possums that carries so many diseases!!!!

Clifton A. Robinson, Lawley, AL, DCNR

We allow running of raccoons year round. It is not detrimental to the resource in any way. It encourages more people to remain involved in hunting by being able to work their dogs. I just recently participated in UKC's World Squirrel Dog Championship in Franklin, Indiana. Thoroughly enjoyed my time there. If I were not allowed to run dogs year round in Alabama I may not have felt confident enough in my dogs to make the trip.

Lea Ann Croyle, Berea, KY, OMCBA

I think that an extension of this season would be good for adults and youth alike to help with clean, fun exercise. To thin down the destruction of the crops needed for livestock too

David J Robertson, Monroe, IN

You have a right to run rabbit dogs or squirrel dogs year round then why not coon hounds?

Merle Seeley, Connersville, IN, UKC/PKC/OMCBA

I am a land owner and was raised on a dairy farm where we had crop damage every year from coons. Also we were always chasing these critters out of our barns and out buildings. My neighbor trapped 19 coon last year out of his attic this past year, these overly populated animals are a nuisance and carry several diseases.

Travis Gideon, Spiceland, IN

I have lived, hunted, trapped and fished in Indiana all my life and support the extension of coonhound running and trapping seasons.

Seth Adam Isch, Adams County, IN, HTDA

I'm a coon hunter and I enjoy running my hounds and I dislike the downtime the state has for running our hounds. I would like you to know I support the coonhound running extension.

Mark Bacon, Milroy, IN, Indiana Farm Bureau Inc.

I am in favor of extending the running season for raccoons and opossums. They are a nuisance to agriculture.

Ronnie Holstine, Washington County, IN

I support the extended Running and training season proposal. I am a life-long resident and avid coon hunter of Indiana.

Brandy Sue Miller, Ripley, IN

I support this proposal.

Chester R. Martin, Clinton County, IN, Johnson County Coonhunters Assoc.

As a lifetime resident of the state of Indiana I enjoy all kinds of hunting and fishing. I fully support extending the running season for coonhounds.

Jeffrey Nicholas Gibbons, Washington County, IN

I have been a resident, coon hunter, and sportsmen in the state of Indiana for my entire life, and would love nothing more than to see the running season for coons to be extended to year round. It would not endanger the coons, and it provides more practice for the dogs as well as the hunters. I would greatly appreciate the consideration of the state of Indiana in this matter, so that the sport, and tradition, of coon hunting can be upheld and passed on to the future generations.

Nathan Gibbons, Salem, IN

I have been a citizen of Indiana my whole life and would like to see the Raccoon running season extended.

Ralph O. Miller, Versailles, IN, IBA

I support the proposal!!

Lori D. Minniear, Wabash County, IN

As a proud citizen of Indiana, and an outdoors person, I support the extension of the raccoon running season.

Jeffrey B. Minniear, Wabash County, IN

As a lifelong citizen of Indiana and an avid outdoorsman I fully support the proposed extension of raccoon running season.

Ryan Miller, Dekalb, IN, Dekalb County Coonhunters Association

As a lifelong resident of Dekalb County, Indiana, I fully agree and support the proposed raccoon and opossum taking/chasing proposed rule. I'm an avid coon hunter, hunting my hounds in competition hunts, and the new extended season will allow more time to train hounds in better weather. I'm an avid deer hunter, small game hunter, turkey hunter, as well as a trapper.

John Clay Noble, Hamlet, IN

I am a lifelong resident of Indiana and support a year round running season for coonhounds

Shelly Kincaid, Lewisville, IN

My family hunts and fish and I support the extended coonhound running season.

Cindy Kincaid, Henry, IN

Members of my family hunt and fish and I support the extended coonhound running season

Abby Kincaid, Henry, IN

I took the hunter safety course and now have a hunting and fishing license and I support the extended coonhound running season.

Richard A Kincaid, Lewisville, IN

I am an active hunter with an Indiana life time hunting license and I support the extension of coonhound running season

Tom Yaraschfski, Clay, IN

As a lifelong hunter I support the change for the coon hunters.

Roger Alan Land, Sullivan, IN

I am in favor of the change. A longer kill season would be nice also. This change will help keep dogs in shape and help in training dogs. My vote is to change.

Tyler Sturgeon, Monroe, IN

I think that they should take the breaks out of the coon hunting season.

Dale M Rakestraw, Dekalb, IN, Dekalb Co. Coonhunters, and HTDA

I very strongly support your consideration of an open dog training season in Indiana!

Christopher Bruce Kelly, Monroe, IN

I would like to see the breaks took out.

Gregory Wayne Campbell, Morgan, IN

All for extending it

Chris Griggs, Brown, IN

I support this season being extended as well.

Vannie Griggs, Brown, IN

I support this season being extended.

Jason Gilliam, Greensburg, IN

Would sure like to see this happen to better our sport of tree dog hunting and pure pleasure to train hounds!

Tammy L Newlin, Silver Lake, IN

I have lived in Indiana almost all my life and am soon to be 50 years old. I am a hunter, fisherman, and sport "woman". I support the extension of running and trapping season for coonhounds in Indiana.

David Edwin Schmidt, Starke County, IN

I am for opening up the running season for Raccoon and Opossum to immediately following hunting season each year, and extend until hunting season re-opens each Fall. I don't believe there to be any biological or ethical reason to oppose this.

Robert Crowe, Henry, IN, Hoosier Tree Dog Alliance

This is an excellent ideal for those of us who enjoy spending time outdoors with our pets. There is no law if you own a house dog that your not allowed to exercise it year round. Why should we not be allowed to exercise our hounds year round?

David J Robertson, Monroe, IN

We have open running season for rabbit dogs and squirrel dogs, why not coon hounds?

Jessica Coffman, Henry County, IN

I support the extension of the coonhound running/training season.

Sonja Coffman, Henry County, IN

I support the coonhound running/training extension that is currently being proposed. I am a lifelong IN resident.

Randall Coffman, Henry County, IN

I am a lifelong Indiana resident and I support the current proposal to lengthen the coon hound training season. I have farmed my whole life and have always been appreciative of the deer and coon hunters that help protect my crops.

John W. Delcamp, Elkhart County, IN

I compete in Coonhound events all over the country. One of the problems that I encounter is the ability to keep my dog well-conditioned due to the amount of time that our training season is closed. I understand that it might be to prevent the taking of hides close to season, but fur is no longer worth what it had been in the past, & our population is plentiful. Here in Northern, In. it is especially bad because our season gets cut short by the weather. I live 12 miles from the Mich. line & they open up 10-1 of every year & close later than we do. I would personally like to see the northern half of the state open up the 1st of Oct. We are extremely limited in our hunting because of population, & so much property is off limits that we could never damage the coon population. Deer hunters hunt from Oct. Through Jan. & deer aren't effected by weather like coon are. As for the harvest of fur before its

prime, it has never become an issue in Canada, or Mich. You might get a little less but you can still sell them. I am not a big coon killer, but I do enjoy the option of rewarding my young dogs, & I eat coon, & also boil the carcasses & feed them to my dogs. Any help with extending the kill season, or the training season will be much appreciated by myself and many others!

Michael Gibson, Shelby, IN

As a lifelong resident of the state of Indiana I support the extension of the coonhound running season. I am a hunter, fisherman and sportsman

Ronald Long, Tipton, IN

I am a lifelong citizen of IN and would like to see running season open year round with no closed running season.

David Bush, Hancock County, IN

As a lifelong resident of Indiana and I support this extension of coonhound running and trapping. I am a hunter, trapper, fisherman, and sportsman.

Donald E. Walston, Dearborn, IN

As a lifelong resident of the State of Indiana I support the extension of coonhound running. I have been a hunter and sportsman all my life.

David Robert Trumbo II, Porter, IN

I support this 100% It will be good conservation as well as keeping youth interested in the outdoors.

Lafayette S. Lyle III, Waterboro, Colleton County, SC

We have had a training (no take) season in South Carolina for about five years. Our old dogs are kept in better shape and our young dogs progress more quickly thanks to it. I know of no violations but you are welcome to contact the SCDNR for their comment.

Donald R Collinsworth, Chelsea, Washtenaw County, MI

It would be a good thing

Brent O. Miller, Versailles, IN, Ducks Unlimited, Hoosier Tree Dog Alliance

I'm an avid deer, turkey, and small game hunter. I support the proposal to extend the running season. I feel that Hoosier Coon Hunters should have the same opportunity to train and condition their dogs as Beaglers, Bird Hunters, and Squirrel Hunters. The extra days in October would be helpful with new hunter recruitment as the weather is normally more favorable during that time of the year.

Justin Dake, Union, IN

I hope this passes, I love being in the woods with family, friends, and my hounds.

Cecil Ray Dake, Union, IN

I enjoy running my hounds. I hope this passes.

Alan Holding, Fishers, IN

I have enjoyed the sports of fishing, hunting and trapping as an Indiana resident for over 30+ years. I fully support the extension of the raccoon & opossum taking/chasing seasons in our State of Indiana.

Arnold Palmeri Jr., Indianapolis, IN

I don't think that it is a good idea to do away with running dogs for hunting. It's been a sport for hundreds of years. If they thought that it was wrong when they wrote the laws and constitution and the declaration of independence then they would have banned it a long time ago. There is nothing wrong with it. You take the dogs out to run and get some exercise and get people away from their hectic life and get to relax out in the great outdoors. Please leave the outdoor sports to the people that enjoy it and not a bunch of politicians that haven't even had their feet dirty and been stuck inside a building all their lives. The great outdoors is a way to take stress away from everyday life for most people. *[Palmeri offered additional comments not directed to the instant rule proposal that are not included in this report.]*

Mike Huppenthal, LaGrange, IN¹

I respectfully urge the NRC to oppose this rule change of hunting with dogs this the first step in taking the right to hunt away from us.

Daniel J Meuser, Clay, IN

I see this as a great change for hound owners and their dogs. It will allow the competition hunters to compete more on an even playing field with out of state competition as there are many other states that have no down time to run the hounds. I would also go as far as to suggest we extend the harvesting season from the 15th of October until the 28th of Feb. The population right now is such that if something is not done disease will run rampant through the population and possibly have adverse effects on other domestic and wild animals. The days of harvesting for mass quantities are over with fur prices as low as I've ever seen them. It would allow hounds men more time to work the younger dogs and thus assist in better hounds and a healthier population of raccoons.

Clarence E Hood, Shelburn, IN

I support this running season I have hunted, fish and trapped all my life, this is a way for me to enjoy the outdoors.

Adam E. Miller, Wabash County, IN

I'm a proud citizen of Indiana and an avid outdoorsman and I would like to give my full support for the extension of the raccoon running season.

¹ This comment was submitted to the Commission under the subject heading "Raccoon & Opossum Taking/Chasing" but appears to be a comments about coyote running pens.

Rusty Hill, Gibson County, IN, Gibson County Coonhunters Club

Please extend the running season for raccoon and possum.

Rick L Clough, Fountain, IN

I am all for it!

Chad W. Lenz, Henry County, IN

I absolutely agree with the amendment to lengthen the Indiana Raccoon& Opossum taking season.

Jim Hunter, Wells County, IN

As a man that has hunted and fished in the state of Indiana his whole life of 56 years I support the new changes to the coon dog hunting and running season I would also like to see squirrel season started later and run longer.

Kevin Beck, Perry, IN

Please extend our season to a full 365 days a year.

Matt Wohlford, Howard, IN

I fully support the extension of the coonhound running season. I am a lifelong resident of Indiana and a hunter, fisherman, and outdoorsman.

Chad W. Lenz, New Castle, IN

Lifelong coon hunter and Indiana resident and I support the current proposal to lengthen the coon hound running season.

Richard Emery, Portland, IN

I am in favor of the extension I find it unbelievable that coonhounds are the only sporting dog to not be able to enjoy our dogs afield 365days a year.

James Sandlin, Switzerland, IN

I am a lifelong resident of Indiana. I hunt and fish and I am business owner. I support this proposal of an extension of coonhound running and an extension of the raccoon taking season. This will allow more days in the field with my grandson.

Eric Russell, Stone County, MO

There is no reason these hunters cannot hunt there hounds all season in mo we can and have no problems I support this extension in my view taking part of the hound running season is just another form of socialist trying to take another god giving right of us hunters away.

Jeff Riggle, Covington, IN, HTDA

I support this change.

Lilly Jo Patton, Waynetown, IN

It is extremely important for the raccoon and opossum running season to be extended to allow hunting enthusiasts the opportunity to work their dogs even more. This sport has deep roots for me and my family and an extended running season will allow us personally to spend more time in the woods participating in the type of hunting that we love so much. It is a hunting sport that has taught me many values about hard work, respect and responsibility. Extending the season will allow other young hunters to get involved more and have more chances to get out in the woods with their hounds.

Ashley Paxton, Crawfordsville, IN, Hoosier Tree Dog

I enjoy hunting and when I am out there I am spending money on fuel and snacks and my hunting license.

Grace Gibby Paxton, Crawfordsville, IN

I am a youth hunter, and I think it's important to extend the hunting time so we (us kids and teens) can have more youth hunts. I enjoy hunting, and it teaches me responsibility and respect for my fellow hunters around me. So the more hunting time I have the less time I spend getting into trouble. Also it's helped me achieve a lot, and I can't get out a lot during hunting season since I wrestle. So I would like to spend more time out in the woods with my dog.

Ryan Patton, Waynetown, IN

I really enjoy hunting, by making the season longer I would be able to do alot more hunting.

Scott Johnson, Hancock, IN, Delta Waterfowl, Chairman

Delta Waterfowl Chapters in Indiana will support the proposed rule changes regarding Raccoon & Opossum Taking/Chasing.

Chris White, Parke, IN

I am a lifelong resident and sportsman of Indiana and support theextended running season.

Michael Carmack, Liberty, IN

I am in favor of proposed rule

Ronald G Brown Galveston, Cass County, IN

I think running season should be extended from October 14th till coon season comes in November 8th, coon hunting with dogs is a sport, not a money thing.

Trent Land, Vigo, IN

I am in favor of the change. A longer kill season and only 1 week in between both ends would be better but this is a start. Thanks

Lee Stocking, Monroe, TN

Growing up in Indiana, but currently residing and hunting in Tennessee I know each states regulations regarding the shut down period of the raccoon chasing vs. non shut down raccoon chasing. I have never personally had any issues in the state of TN during the chase season, nor know of anyone having issues during the chase season. The shutdown of Indiana's running/chasing show no positive impact on the raccoon health or shows any negative impact if Indiana's shut down period before and after the kill season. I vote for Indiana to allow raccoon chasing before and after the kill season.

Tim Ison, Glenwood, IN OMCBA

Life time hunter, train young dogs.

Christopher McCrary, Bibb, GA

I would like to take this time to say a added running season is great. This is the catch and release of hunting. This is where true sportsman shine. We simply want to keep our dogs in good health. It's hard to run a dog like it would if it was hunting.

Thad Simpson, Sullivan, IN

I support this bill as an avid coonhunter and houndsman.

Craig Kline, Cass, IN

As a lifelong resident and hunter of Indiana. I support the extension of Coonhound running season.

Troy Pearson, Sullivan, IN

Full support of this extension!

Stephen Kim Fulford, Monroe, IN, Indiana Trappers Org.

I approve of the changes in the law that will open trapping season for coon and opossum earlier.

George Steffes, Edgerton, OH

Open running season is nice, to be able to exercise your dogs to keep them in shape for night hunts.

Roger C. Geesaman, Jay County, IN

I would really like to see the times changed for the running season of Raccoon hunting. We need this extra time to get our dogs ready for the Night Hunts. We normally have 2 to 3 wks during kill season that are good hunting then the weather lays our dogs up. Thank You for our consideration.

Charles D. Casebolt, Dearborn, IN

I am a lifetime resident and I support the extension of the Coonhound running and trapping seasons. I am a sportsman and value our time afield.

Greg Waskom, Brownstown, IN

I am in favor of extending the running season for raccoons.

Bart Hainz, Yorktown, IN

I would love to see the chasing of raccoon being open all year with no closed running season. Indiana is one of the few states that has a closed running season, which there is no solid proof for the closed season one of the only things we know for sure it does is reduce the economic expect of what raccoon hunter would spend during this time if they could be out running their dogs. Please vote to remove completely or to shorten the closed running season.

Lincoln Rily Poehlein, Pike, IN

This would be a good thing to consider. I mean why not let us have two more weeks out of the year to run our dogs. Plainly, we just like to be in the woods whether we harvest the animal or not.

Jordan Coble, Carroll, IN

I've been a trapper and hunter all my life. I support this.

Jeffrey R. Hovious, Shelby County, IN

As a lifelong resident of Indiana I support this extension of raccoon running, and trapping. I am a hunter, fisherman, and sportsman.

James King, Vincennes, IN

As an Indiana hunter, fisherman, and general sportsman, I support the proposition of an extended season for running hounds.

Bryan Keith Williams, Connersville, IN, TWB&FA, HTDA

I have been a long time hunter and fisherman in the State of Indiana. I enjoy raccoon hunting a lot and feel like the weeks that season is closed is a lot of lost time in training my hounds. I would greatly appreciate you taking a look at our closed season and opening it up, like a lot of the other hunting dog groups. Thank you for taking the time to review our seasons.

Dana Dimmock, Miami, IN

I think that the running season should start as soon as hunting season ends.

Nick Erny, Huntingburg, IN

The ability to hunt year round will give us the opportunity to keep our hounds in better condition and the IDNR to make more money on out of state license sales.

Craig Robinson, Tipton County, IN

As a lifelong resident of Indiana I support the extension of coonhound running and trapping season I am a hunter, trapper, fisherman, and a Hoosier sportsman thank you

Larry Hall, Lagrange, IN, HDTA

Need to significantly open up the harvest season for raccoon and opossum. Opening Oct 15th and closing Feb 28th or thereabouts would substantially increase the harvest of raccoon and opossum. The current season conflicts too much with deer hunters and much habitat is off limits due to leasing/QDMA for deer. The northern third of the state is adversely affected by weather more years than not. Opening earlier by 2-3 weeks and running a month later would substantially increase the harvest in my opinion.

James Elrod, Williamsport, IN

I am in favor of this.

Randall A Sizemore, Elkhart, IN

I support this change

Dave Lindauer, Posey County, IN

It is the best proposal and long overdue. to be able to keep your dogs in hunting condition without a big lay off before season, it will be greatly appreciated.

Deborah M Crump, Hartford City, IN

I like this new running time

Shane Smith, Blackford, IN

We are the only hunters who are not able to enjoy our hounds year round. I believe some of these laws are long overdue to be adjusted

Rod DeRoo, Adams County, IN

It only makes sense for trappers to be allowed to keep raccoons caught starting on November 8 instead of having to wait until the 15. A silly rule to begin with that should be changed.

Michael D. Goodpaster, Jennings County, IN, HTDA

I support this proposal.

Michael A. Kempf, Posey County, IN, Posey County Coon Club

I support the proposed extension of the coonhound running and trapping. I am a hunter and fisherman. I am the president of the Posey County Coon Club.

Chris Gerth, Sullivan, IN

Please open up the running season for running coonhounds.

Lyle Kime, Kosciusko, IN

Allow trapping season when dog taking season comes in.

Kevin D. Ennis, Monroe County, IN, Ellettsville Coonhunters

Stay the way they are.

Charles B. Herron, Montgomery, IN, Hoosier Tree Dog
Lengthening dog running season and kill season.

Thomas A Lynch, Danville, IN, HTDA Member
I support the extended running season. I am appreciative that the IDNR is looking at this extension!

Jerald Sullivan, Danville, IN, Hoosier Tree Dog Association
I support the extended running season.

Elizabeth Dice, Fayette County, IN, Hoosier Tree Dog Alliance
I have lived in Indiana my whole life. I have always hunted and fished with him and other friends. I strongly support the coonhound running extension. It helps the dogs to stay in shape especially in February when the dogs have been in kill season for the last 3 months.

Travis Maschino, Jennings, IN, Hoosier Tree Dog Alliance
I support the change for running season I would like the extra time to run my dogs.

Jim Ridge, Lewis, IN
I am in support of the proposed changes.

Talmage Douglas Cheek, Auburn, IN
As resident of Indiana, I support extension of our running season. I'm sportsman hunter-- fisherman -etc. Thank you for your time and support of this bill.

Fredrick C. Ricketts, Hendricks, IN
I support the extension of running coon dogs all year.

Stephen Kim Fulford Monroe, IN, Indiana Trappers Assoc.
It's about time this rule was changed. At the cost of licenses why should one group have an advantage in the field over another group?

Junius John Bossier, Parish Haun, LA
I am a lifelong resident of Haughton, Louisiana, and I support this extension of coonhound running and trapping.
I am an avid hunter, trapper, and sportsman.

Paul Anthony Bennett, Vermillion, IN
Only a coonhound has a tie up season, I don't like to see my hounds set in a pen before coon taking season comes in and after it goes out. I like to exercise my hound and I have 4 during running season each one goes out at the least twice a week. Please see what you can do to change this horrible rule.

Roger Black, Logansport, IN²

Keep dog training facilities open. DO NOT agree with HSUS.

Stanley D. Bryson, Jackson County, NC

I realize I am not a resident but hope feedback helps. We in North Carolina have had chase/running seasons for some time. No real problems associated with this activity and the additional training time greatly helps in being able to control hounds better so there are less problems/conflicts with general or non-hunting public. This is a great way to introduce young hunters to the sport of hound hunting in a non lethal setting and in warmer weather.

Ernie L Brown, Jay, IN

I am a coon hunter and I support the extended coon hound running season

Cathy Stemper, Doug Stemper, and James R. Lundy³

I would like to take this opportunity to express my support for Administrative Cause No. 10-038D. The Indiana Natural Resources Commission (NRC) recently approved this proposal for preliminary adoption on Tuesday, March 16, 2010.

Under the direction of the Indiana Natural Resources Advisory Council (NRAC) the Indiana Sportsmen's Roundtable (ISR) set up a task force of Indiana sporting and conservation groups to develop a reasonable compromise on coonhound running dates. The final rule change proposal...resulted from a collaborative effort on the part of the Hoosier Tree Dog Alliance (HTDA), The Indiana Bowhunters Association (IBA), the Indiana Deer Hunters Association (IDHA), the Furtakers of America (FTA) and the Indiana State Trappers Association (ISTA). This proposal is the end result of many hours of hard work from the ISR Task Force and by the leadership of these conservation groups and epitomizes the cohesiveness of Indiana's Sporting Community. I agree with the final conclusions of this task force and ask the IDNR and its regulating bodies support these hard working Indiana Conservation groups.

Donald L Huber, Connersville, IN HTDA

I am in favor of the proposed changes for the taking and chasing of raccoon & opossum

Oscar King Jr., Putnam County, IN

² This comment was submitted to the Commission under the subject heading "Raccoon & Opossum Taking/Chasing" but appears to be a comment about coyote running pens.

³ On their face these comments do not contain the residency information required by Information Bulletin # 55. These comments were received by regular mail and the hearing officer presumes that the residency information was available on the envelope but was not recorded before the envelope was discarded. Consequently, the hearing officer has exercised discretion to consider and include these comments in her report.

I am a lifelong resident of Indiana and I support the extension of Coonhound running and Trapping. I hunt trap and fish and feel I am a huge supporter of the outdoor sportsman.

Timothy Scott Carter, Henry, IN

This season needs to be lengthened, to help reduce road kill and possible auto accidents from trying to avoid the animals in the roadways.

Ura L Hochstetler, Nappanee, IN, U-N-L Furs

If you are going to extend season start earlier in year like starting on Nov 1 both trapping and dog running If you extend it later like to Feb 15 you do not gain because fur is not prime any more Also I am a fur buyer and what I see in a earlier season the weather is nicer and people will go out more to hunt and trap those first two weeks when the weather is nice than the later part of the season.

Bruce Hill, Shelby County, IN

Take all year; they are hardly hunted; very abundant.

Priscilla Herochik, Crown Point, IN, Advocates for Indiana Wildlife

I oppose any extension of the season for killing raccoons by chasing them, shooting them and often just letting dogs kill them. I also oppose any extension of the season for chasing them, tormenting them, keeping them away from their babies, keeping them from being able to freely seek food and otherwise sadistically and with no purpose molesting raccoons. This season already takes place during baby season. Such "sport" should not be allowed at all much less giving individuals more opportunities to practice their cruelty. I am opposed to anything like this at any time. When these raccoons are chased and can't find enough food for their babies, the babies often show up at a rehabber's door when found by a compassionate Indiana Citizen. I'm sure that the DNRs advice would be to just let the babies starve in the grass, but thankfully most people don't enjoy such lawn side entertainment. Then, when the rehabbers are overcrowded with orphaned or deserted babies, guess who complains the loudest when they have to hear about it? The DNR. How about doing something for the 88 percent of Indiana's population who neither participates in or approves of coon hunting? How about doing something for the welfare of the wildlife instead of again catering to the special interests who buy licenses to torture, harass and kill our wildlife? The citizens of Indiana would have a much better opinion of the DNR if it did something to help the animals instead of exploiting them again for the benefit of a minority of individuals still trapped in a 14th century mindset. How about doing that for a change? Reduce or eliminate the time devoted to harassing and killing these animals. Let's take Indiana into the 21st Century.

William B. Smith, Losantville, IN, Wayne County Coon Hunters

I support the extended running law. I love to watch and listen to my dogs work. I was born and raised in Indiana; any time I can go hunting more is a good day.

Jo Ann R. Boesche, Lafayette, IN

I am very upset my neighbor has a live trap set 24/7 he then "relocates" them to GOD knows where!!!! Today I received news my orphan raccoon could not be saved [starvation, and spinal injury] I drove to Delphi to the Wildcat rescue for help because this idiot trapped his mom and relocated it!!!!!! The little guy didn't have a chance!!! Have a pix of him. I know he is just protecting his property. Heard it all before.

Mark Newlin, Howard, IN

I trap raccoon and dont see why the change of start date for trapping should not change. Why should hunters get an extra week before trappers get started? If the raccoons are prime enough to hunt they are prime enough to trap. It would be nice to get a step up on Mother Nature also. Seems we only get about 10 good days of trapping before the weather starts being a factor.

William C. Ruddell, LaPorte County, IN

For the further success of our wild turkey, waterfowl and upland game bird populations, it is imperative to extend all reasonable taking of these two predators.

Denita McCrum, St. Joseph, IN

I oppose any extension of the season for killing raccoons by chasing them, shooting them and often just letting dogs kill them. I also oppose any extension of the season for chasing them, tormenting them, keeping them away from their babies, keeping them from being able to freely seek food and otherwise sadistically and with no purpose molesting raccoons. This season already takes place during baby season. Such "sport" should not be allowed at all much less giving individuals more opportunities to practice their cruelty. I am opposed to anything like this at any time. When these raccoons are chased and can't find enough food for their babies, the babies often show up at a rehabber's door when found by a compassionate Indiana Citizen. I'm sure that the DNRs advice would be to just let the babies starve in the grass, but thankfully most people don't enjoy such lawnside entertainment. Then, when the rehabbers are overcrowded with orphaned or deserted babies, guess who complains the loudest when they have to hear about it? The DNR. How about doing something for the 88 percent of Indiana's population who neither participates in or approves of coonhunting? How about doing something for the welfare of the wildlife instead of again catering to the special interests who buy licenses to torture, harass and kill our wildlife? The citizens of Indiana would have a much better opinion of the DNR if it did something to help the animals instead of exploiting them again for the benefit of a minority of individuals still trapped in a 14th century mindset. How about doing that for a change? Reduce or eliminate the time devoted to harassing and killing these animals. Let's take Indiana into the 21st Century.

Scottie Dorton, Owen County, KY

I am in support of the extension of coonhound running and trapping. I am a hunter, fishermen, and sportsman.

Michael Eugene Patton, Orange County, IN (July 8, 2010)

I think it should be extend.

Carl Menne, Dearborn, IN

MORE raccoons and opossums need to be taken; both are now very common around the houses here after dark, and I have begun to see them crossing/playing in the gravel roads during the daytime. The raccoons are a pest, rummaging through everything, and the opossums I suspect of taking young kittens outside. Both animals were rarely seen here in my youth but now are over-running the area.

Alex D. Case, Greensburg, IN

I hope this law passes it will give me more time afield with my dogs like the beagle & squirrel dog handlers have had for years.

Brent L Baker, Hendricks, IN

I support this amendment except for allowing running season on February 1st. I would like that to stay at the current date.

Doug Burris, Indianapolis, IN

Raccoon harvest is largely affected by the value of the pelts. Like in all business sell high hold low. By you mandating a time when all legally acquired pelts must be sold that takes away my ability to sell the pelts at their greatest value which also diminishes my number of raccoons trapped. The trapping season that coincides with opening of the general deer season also reduces the volume of raccoons and other furbearing animals taken by the sheer fact as trappers do not like to have their traps and legally caught animals exposed to a greater number of people which increases the risk of theft and vandalism. Open the trapping season earlier in late October or the first week in November will significantly increase the harvest of a largely overpopulated raccoon.

Robert Beeler, Howard County, IN

I did not see anywhere on the form that someone had to have a license for taking or chasing a raccoon or opossum is that correct? I would think that is the same as trapping them you would need a license.

Kerry Turner, Delaware County, IN

Whould love to be able 2 run and train coonhounds year around

Donald L Huber, Connersville, IN HTDA

I am in favor of this change !

Stuart Grell, Attica, IN

I am fully in favor of this change. Thank you.

Tim Rose, Columbus, IN, Fur Takers of America State Organizer

Fur Takers of America support the season changes for the chasing/taking of raccoon & opossum in the state of Indiana.

Michael S. Linne, French Lick, IN

I agree that there are way to many raccoons. I also agree that season could be extended, but it needs to extended in the later part of the season while the fur is still prime.

c) Response by the Department of Natural Resources

The Department of Natural Resources offered the following response to the public comments.

The DNR and the Natural Resources Advisory Council through the Fish and Wildlife Comprehensive Rule Enhancement Project received many comments in the past two years regarding extending the running season for raccoons. As a result of the public comments and agreement by a taskforce established by the Indiana Sportsman's Roundtable that included representatives from the Indiana Bowhunter's Association, Indiana Deer Hunter's Association, Indiana State Trapper's Association, Furtakers of America, and Hoosier Tree Dog Alliance, the DNR proposed to open the running season on February 1 and end it on October 25.

Individuals who hunt raccoons and opossums with dogs need the opportunity to train their dogs throughout the year. This allows them to keep the dogs in good physical condition, keep the dogs active, allow the dogs to train in better weather, and help the dogs learn to pick up the scent of raccoons prior to the hunting season. This extended period of time also allows for the dogs to be kept in good physical condition for championships.

The DNR did not propose a year-round chasing season due to the conflicts with other user groups that are in the field in late October and early November. Hunting seasons for deer, squirrel, turkey, coyote, fox, and grouse are open in late October.

Individuals who chase raccoons or opossums during the chasing season are not allowed to carry a firearm, other than a handgun carried under a personal protection permit. Therefore, these season dates are not likely to impact the statewide population. Raccoons typically give birth in April and May, and the young can typically fend for themselves by the end of September (*Mammals of Indiana* by John O. Whitaker, Jr. and Russell E. Mumford. 2009).

The DNR is not proposing to extend the trapping or taking season any earlier than November 8 because raccoon hides are not likely to be prime, or of any value, earlier than November. On average, raccoon hides were worth less than \$7.00 each during the 08-09 and 09-10 trapping seasons. DNR staff met with representatives from the Hoosier Tree Dog Alliance, Indiana State Trapper's

Association, and Fur takers of America to discuss the season dates, and there was agreement that starting the season earlier would not be likely to increase the take of raccoons. If the raccoon hides are not of any value, then they will be less likely to be trapped. Furthermore, the DNR has traditionally set hunting and trapping seasons when the fur is prime, and season dates will not impact the resource or cause compensatory mortality. Because the raccoon population is high in the State of Indiana at this time, the DNR does not believe that extending the trapping season will harm the population. The hunting season for raccoons and opossums already starts on November 8. Making these starting dates the same will also simplify the rule language by establishing one taking season. The DNR believes that the extended trapping season will be beneficial to trappers and others who want to help reduce the raccoon population.

3. RECOMMENDATION

Although a few comments in opposition to the rule proposal were received, the overwhelming majority of the comments received express favor for the proposed rule amendments. The individuals who support the extensions to the trapping and chasing seasons are primarily men and women who hunt, trap and chase raccoons and opossums. The individuals who oppose the extensions of these seasons appear to be opposed to all hunting, trapping and chasing of wild animals.

Hunting, trapping and chasing of raccoons and opossums in the wild are traditional field sport activities that are already lawful under 312 IAC 9-3-14. Identical or very similar hunting, trapping and chasing activities have been continuously authorized in administrative rules since at least as early as 1969. *(310 IAC 3-3-3 and 310 IAC 3-3-7, adopted on December 9, 1969, were repealed and recodified in 1987 at 310 IAC 3.1-3-14, Indiana Administrative Code, 1988 Edition, Vol. 4, pg. 116 & 121 and Indiana Administrative Code, 1991 Cumulative Supplement, Vol. 1, pg. 742. 310 IAC 3.1-3-14 was repealed and recodified in 1997 at the existing 312 IAC 9-3-14. 20 Indiana Register 2707.)*

The Department reports that raccoon populations are presently high. Some public comments report large number of nuisance raccoons being trapped and note that these animals can be destructive to agricultural crops and poultry. Raccoons and opossums are also predators of ground nesting birds, amphibians, turtles and turtle eggs. The hearing officer notes the importance that a species' population be managed for the benefit of not only that species but for all other wild animals and people.

Hunting and trapping of raccoons and opossums aids in the ability to manage healthy populations. The chasing of raccoons and opossums in the field is a useful and necessary means of training and conditioning dogs used in the hunting of raccoons and opossums. While the Department does not anticipate that the proposed amendments will impact raccoon or opossum populations, this rule proposal was designed to be beneficial to those individuals who assist in population management by hunting and trapping.

The proposed amendments, as presented at Exhibit A, that add seven (7) days to the long established trapping season and twenty-four (24) days to the historic chasing season for raccoons and opossums is recommended for final adoption.

Dated: October 6, 2010

Sandra L. Jensen
Hearing Officer

“Exhibit A”

TITLE 312 NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Proposed Rule LSA Document #10-230F

DIGEST

Amends 312 IAC 9-3-14 to extend the running season and change the starting date for the trapping season for raccoons and opossums. Effective 30 days after filing with the Publisher.

SECTION 1. 312 IAC 9-3-14 IS AMENDED TO READ AS FOLLOWS:

312 IAC 9-3-14 Opossums and raccoons

Authority: IC 14-10-2-4; IC 14-22-2-6

Affected: IC 14-22; IC 35-47-2

Sec. 14. (a) Except as provided in subsection (b), an individual may do the following:

(1) ~~Hunt~~ **Take** raccoons and Virginia opossums from ~~noon~~ **8 a.m.** on November 8 until noon on January 31 of the following year.

~~(2) Trap raccoons and Virginia opossums from 8 a.m. on November 15 until noon on January 31 of the following year.~~

~~(3)~~ **(2)** Chase raccoons and Virginia opossums from noon on February ~~15~~ **1** until noon on October ~~14~~ **25**.

(b) A nonresident may

~~(1) hunt take~~ raccoons under subsection (a)(1) ~~and~~

~~(2) trap raccoons under subsection (a)(2);~~

only to the extent that these raccoon seasons in the state of the nonresident are open to Indiana residents.

(c) An individual must not do the following:

(1) Possess a firearm, air rifle, or another device capable of taking a raccoon or Virginia opossum while chasing a raccoon or opossum during the chasing season established under subsection ~~(a)(3)~~: **(a)(2)**.

(2) Remove, attempt to remove, dislodge, or attempt to dislodge a raccoon or Virginia opossum from:

(A) a tree hollow;

(B) a hole;

(C) a den;

(D) a pocket;

(E) a cavity;

(F) a burrow;
(G) a tile; or
(H) any other place;
where the raccoon or Virginia opossum has secreted itself for security or protection or in which the raccoon maintains a nest or den.

(d) Notwithstanding subsection (c)(1), an individual may possess a handgun in accordance with IC 35-47 while chasing raccoons and Virginia opossums under this section if the person:

(1) has a valid unlimited license to carry a handgun:

(A) issued under IC 35-47-2-3; or

(B) recognized under IC 35-47-2-21(b); or

(2) is not required to possess a license to carry a handgun under IC 35-47-2-2.

(Natural Resources Commission; 312 IAC 9-3-14; filed May 12, 1997, 10:00 a.m.: 20 IR 2707; filed May 28, 1998, 5:14 p.m.: 21 IR 3714; readopted filed Jul 28, 2003, 12:00 p.m.: 27 IR 286; filed Sep 23, 2004, 3:00 p.m.: 28 IR 540; filed Sep 6, 2007, 12:20 p.m.: 20071003-IR-312070023FRA; filed Apr 4, 2008, 2:56 p.m.: 20080430-IR-312070659FRA; readopted filed Nov 24, 2008, 11:08 a.m.: 20081210-IR-312080672RFA; filed Mar 12, 2010, 1:28 p.m.: 20100407-IR-312090479FRA)